

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) An optical fiber splicing instrument for use in splicing at least one pair of optical fibers, comprising:

a holding assembly, which has two end portions in a first direction and at least one passage way for positioning and holding the optical fibers upon the splicing, wherein the passage way extends between the end portions in the first direction and is positioned at a predetermined position in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction;

a shutter member which has a main portion ~~formed with~~ having at least one aperture and is movably fitted to one of the end portions of the holding assembly, wherein the main portion is movable between first and second positions in the second direction, the first position is a position where the aperture is positioned away from the predetermined position in the second direction so that the passage way is blocked off by the main portion, and the second position is a position where the passage way and the aperture are positioned in correspondence with each other in the second direction so that the passage way is opened through the aperture in the first direction; and

urging means for urging the main portion of the shutter member to be positioned at the first position.

Claim 2. (original) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 1, wherein the main portion of the shutter member comprises a flat shutter plate formed with the aperture, and the flat shutter plate is laid on a plane perpendicular to the first direction.

Claim 3. (original) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 1, further comprising guiding means for guiding a movement of the main portion of the shutter member in the second direction while preventing the main portion from moving in the first direction.

Claim 4. (original) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 3, wherein: the shutter member further comprises a pressed portion; and, when the pressed portion is pressed towards a predetermined direction oblique to the first and the second directions, the guiding means guides the main portion in the second direction.

Claim 5. (original) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 3, the guide means is formed integral with the shutter member.

Claim 6. (original) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 5, wherein: the holding assembly has a hooked portion; the guide means has a C-like shaped cross-section in a plane defined by the first and the second directions, wherein the C-like

shaped cross-section opens in the second direction; and the guide means is hooked on the hooked portion to movably hold the hooked portion.

Claim 7. (currently amended) The optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 1, wherein the at least one aperture is ~~[[one]]~~ selected from the group consisting of a circular hole, an angular hole, an ellipse hole and a slit extending in a third direction perpendicular to the first and the second directions.

Claim 8. (original) An optical connection adapter comprising the optical fiber splicing instrument in accordance with claim 1.

Claim 9. (original) A mating optical instrument which is able to be mated with the optical fiber splicing instrument according to claim 4, comprising a projection, which is brought into contact with the pressed portion and presses the pressed portion in the predetermined direction when the mating optical instrument is mated with the optical fiber splicing instrument.

Claim 10. (original) The mating optical instrument according to claim 9, wherein the projection has a slanting surface perpendicular to the predetermined direction.

Claim 11. (original) An optical fiber connector comprising the mating optical instrument in accordance with claim 9.

Claim 12. (currently amended) The optical fiber connector according to claim 11, comprising a housing and a fiber end protector, wherein: the housing ~~is formed with~~ has an opening; the fiber end protector is movably arranged in the opening so that the fiber end protector projects from the housing through the opening when the optical fiber connector is to mated with the optical fiber splicing instrument and, ~~on the other hand,~~ the fiber end protector is retracted within the housing when the optical fiber connector is mated with the optical fiber splicing instrument; and the projection is formed integral with the fiber end protector.

Claim 13. (original) The optical fiber connector according to claim 11, comprising a housing which is provided with the projection.

Claim 14. (currently amended) A ~~combination of the optical connection adapter according to claim 8 and the optical fiber connector according to claim [[10]]~~ 11 and an optical connection adapter comprising an optical fiber splicing instrument for use in splicing at least one pair of optical fibers, comprising a holding assembly, which has two end portions in a first direction and at least one passage way for positioning and holding the optical fibers upon the splicing, wherein the passage way extends between the end portions in the first direction and is positioned at a predetermined position in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction; a shutter member, which has a main portion having at least one aperture

and is and is movably fitted to one of the end portions of the holding assembly, wherein the main portion is movable between first and second positions in the second direction, the first position is a position where the aperture is positioned away from the predetermined position in the second direction so that the passage way is blocked off by the main portion, and the second position is a position where the passage way and the aperture are positioned in correspondence with each other in the second direction so that the passage way is opened through the aperture in the first direction; and urging means for urging the main portion of the shutter member to be positioned at the first position.